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responded splendidly. State education authorities also responded splendidly to the appeal of the federal government, through the Federal Board, to demonstrate the practical utility of vocational education in the exacting emergency of war. The institutions providing vocational training for conscripted men have stood the acid test of devising schemes of training to meet the special requirements of waging war. This demonstration of social service in a great emergency will stand to the credit of vocational education after the war is won as fulfilling the highest ideals of its advocates, and it may confidently be anticipated that the achievements in the future, when the community returns to its peaceful pursuits, will even exceed those rendered in war time.

HOUSING FOR WAR WORKERS ENGAGED ON ARMY AND NAVY CONTRACTS

BY JAMES FORD,

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The problem of housing munition workers was serious in America prior to our entrance in the war. In Bridgeport and various other cities filling war orders for our Allies, there was considerable pressure of population and a shortage of accommodation. This shortage became much more serious and this whole problem more widespread, after our entrance in the war. Building materials, labor and capital, were difficult to secure, prices of both materials and labor high, and private construction became considerably reduced even when the need of construction was rapidly increasing. Construction by the federal government was therefore imperative.

It was quickly recognized that house building was an important part of the war program; it was seen that it would be impossible to get an adequate labor supply or to hold it, unless the workmen were properly housed in convenient, sanitary dwellings accessible to their work shops, and offered at a rental which they could afford to pay. An allotment of \$50,000,000 was made by Congress in March, 1918, to provide for building houses for workers in the shipyards. Subsequently \$25,000,000 was added to the fund; this \$75,000,000 is

expended under the direction of A. Merritt Taylor of the Emergency Fleet Corporation.

In February, 1918, the Bureau of Industrial Housing and Transportation was created, of which Otto M. Eidlitz is director, for the purpose of providing for the construction of houses for industrial operatives engaged on army or navy contracts. After considerable debate Congress voted \$50,000,000 to this Bureau for use throughout the country and \$10,000,000 more for the housing of government clerks in Washington. Subsequently, \$40,000,000 has been added to this fund, making \$100,000,000 altogether available to meet this national emergency.

Investigations have been made in scores of American cities upon recommendation coming from the local agencies, or from the army or navy. Where acute housing shortage has been found to be a cause of rapid labor turnover, or the output of war materials was retarded by lack of available homes for workmen, measures have been taken to secure the necessary dwellings. The procedure is, first to make a thorough canvass of the local problem to find out if the shortage is actual, and to discover its nature, for one city may need houses for single labor, another for unskilled married operatives, and another for skilled operatives. Many need houses for all these groups. After the actual and prospective needs of the community are ascertained attempts have been made to solve the local problem through improved transportation and through canvass and registration of vacancies of the city and its suburbs. In a number of places it has been possible by these devices to solve the local problem without new construction and in practically every instance the shortage has been somewhat relieved by these methods.

For example,—special train service has been provided from the highly congested district of Perth Amboy, South Amboy and Morgan to Asbury Park. An elaborate vacancy canvass revealed approximately 700 vacant houses and flats, and many thousand vacant rooms available for the use of industrial operatives. Express trains from Asbury Park to the factories of this district were run each morning and night and with tickets available for workers in government plants at 30 cents for the round trip. A similar solution of the housing problem, through transportation, is projected from the Indiana Steel Towns, Gary, Hammond, Indiana Harbor, East Chicago, to South Chicago, where careful canvass has revealed over five thousand vacant houses and flats.

In more than a score of cities and towns, through coöperation of the national, state and city Councils of Defense, a local Homes Registration Service has been established, keeping full records of each vacancy and providing centralized, accessible information for all industrial workers in search of homes. Cities in which this service has been established are the following:

Bridgeport, Conn., Erie, Pa., Bath, Maine, New London, Conn., Norfolk, Va., Lowell, Mass., Chicago, Ill., Perth Amboy, N. J., Asbury Park, N. J., Long Branch, N. J., Butler, Pa., Easton, Pa., East Chicago, Ind., Gary, Ind., Hammond, Ind., Alliance, Ohio, Newport, R. I., Dayton, Ohio, Sharon, Pa., Newark, N. J., Rock Island, Ill., Moline, Ill., Davenport, Iowa, Cleveland, Ohio, New Brunswick, N. J., Niagara Falls, N. Y., Niles, Ohio, Portsmouth, Va., Suffolk, Va., Philadelphia, Pa., Utica, N. Y., Warren, Ohio, Buffalo, N. Y., Youngstown, Ohio, Derby, Conn., Naugatuck, Conn., Canton, Ohio, Pittsburgh, Pa., Trenton, N. J., Watertown, N. Y.

Where there has been complaint of rent profiteering, a local committee has been established also, generally through the local Council of Defense, to deal with such cases. Each separate committee has sub-committees on rent adjustment, consisting generally of one representative of labor, chosen from a list prepared by the central labor union, one representative of the real estate or manufacturing interests, and a third person mutually acceptable representing the general public. In New London, where the first committee of the kind was established, more than a score of cases have been handled satisfactorily. The landlord and tenant are both summoned to appear. The facts of the case are closely analyzed. The landlord is sometimes vindicated but where he is found guilty of rent profiteering he is told that "war profits are a dishonor," that high rents reduce the production of war material and he is appealed to on moral and patriotic grounds. He is shown what would be a proper rent for his property and if he refuses to reduce his rent the facts are published, without comment, in the local paper.

In nearly forty cities additional housing has been required, the investigation having proved the community to be saturated, and industrial output to be reduced through housing shortage. To meet the needs of these communities the United States Housing Corporation was established. The officers of the corporation are:

President, Otto M. Eidlitz; Vice-President, J. D. Leland 3d; Treasurer, G. G. Box; Secretary, Burt L. Fenner. The other members are Albert B. Kerr, John W. Alvord, and W. E. Shannon. It was originally expected that the government would provide loans of 80 per cent of the money used for local construction and that 20 per cent would be provided from local sources. This plan was abandoned and replaced by construction and operation solely by the government for a number of reasons. *First*, because it proved very difficult to get the different communities to agree to their share of the cost of new construction. *Second*, because under this arrangement houses could be sold as soon as constructed and there was danger that certain purchasers would not keep up their premises and thus injure the entire estate. *Third*, because delays developed from the continuous need of negotiating with the communities as to their participation in the housing development, the most prominent difficulty being their desire to put certain properties on the market, not leaving the bureau a free hand. *Fourth*, the local share of the capital was raised, in a large part, by local manufacturers; this was objectionable to the working class especially in cities in which there was but a single war industry, for workmen complained believing that their domestic life would be dominated by their employers. The houses are therefore to be built and managed by the government during the war.

The funds have actually been available to the bureau only since June, 1918. The United States Housing Corporation was established on July 11, 1918. Two weeks after the Corporation was formed land had already been purchased in over a dozen cities; old hotels had been purchased for remodelling near Portsmouth; contracts had been let at Bethlehem and Charleston and Portsmouth, Virginia, and bids were being received on the construction for Washington, Bridgeport and various other places. Plans are already drawn for more than a score of operations and contracts are let a few days after the plans are approved.

This corporation, after close analysis of the needs of the industrial cities for each type of labor employed, and after careful selection of sites, plans and builds houses ranging in number from a few score to a thousand or more. Every attempt has been made to consider the tastes and interests of the persons to be housed. A careful canvass of their desires always precedes the making of

plans. Arrangements are made to provide for the civic and social life of the future occupants in case the group of houses is located outside of the heart of an established city.

To protect the bureau against excessive payments for land, the Real Estate Division always secures estimates of the value of all acceptable sites from the mayor of the city, the local chamber of commerce and the rotary club and from a special local committee of carefully selected real estate men appointed by the National Real Estate Association. A strong appeal is made as to the importance of unbiased, discriminating and patriotic service by these committees and the land owner is induced to cut his prices down to a pre-war figure. Many of the houses, however, are built on army and navy land so that the question of purchase is not raised.

The types of houses to be constructed vary according to the needs of the locality and the type of labor to be housed. Temporary construction is of course necessary in places where industry will not continue after the war is over. In permanent communities it is more economical to construct permanent houses, so located that they will be readily salable after the war is over. Dormitories for women workers, known as residence halls, are being constructed in Washington, with a cafeteria, a central auditorium, and small recreation halls in each unit, and other features which would tend to make these wholesome and pleasing places of residence. Temporary dormitories are constructed at several of the local plants. A few apartment houses are being constructed in Washington and row or group dwellings, semi-detached houses and cottages, both for skilled and unskilled labor are to be built in industrial communities throughout the country. In all cases the desires of the workmen and their wives are carefully canvassed and an attempt is made to build houses which conform to their desires, which are practical, convenient, homelike, but which do not depart widely from the prevailing types of houses with which working men are familiar. Standard house plans, specifications and rules have been drawn up for architects, town planners and engineers.